

# Virtual concierge right out of futuristic movie

**Condo security.** The tele-security service is a great use of technology, but can it replace a real person?

concierge. She handles the typical tasks of a concierge such as greeting residents, accepting parcels, making phone calls for taxis, offering restaurant recommendations in addition to providing a security presence for the building. The only difference is, she does it from 30 kilometres away.

The system of 50 security cameras, motion sensors and video and voice technology allows for remote viewing and monitoring from an off-site control centre. One person can monitor several buildings, parking lots and construction sites with Cisco-enabled technology, which can save a significant amount on on-site staff costs.

David Hyde is a Toronto security and crime prevention consultant with 22 years of property management experience.

He says the virtual concierge is fine, "but it's not going to patrol the grounds, it's not going to leave the desk and walk

around, it is not going to deter criminals from coming through the lobby or doing anything nefarious."

Unfortunately, condo security is often a tough sell to the cost-adverse condo board, and isn't often implemented until something's happened.

"Very often security isn't an issue until it becomes an issue. Security tends to be one of those things that's put alongside removing snow and house-keeping and maintenance of the common elements and it's very often the fact that security isn't really prioritized until there's some break-ins, until there's an assault of a resident, until there's a break into some vehicles in the underground parking," says Hyde.

With all the new high-tech devices, sensors, cameras and computers, Hyde says some of the most effective security measures are just common sense. He advises condo residents to be vigilant about their



**Virtual concierge Vanessa Singh handles concierge tasks from 30 km away.** COURTESY OF TRIDEL

surroundings. "We go about, we feel very comfortable, and we're not really switched on. We're not really looking at who followed us into the parking garage, which car just followed their way in, or if somebody suspicious is hanging around or if somebody comes to the door and we just let them in. And all of those, that's how criminals perpetrate their crimes."



**The virtual concierge is shown here at Tridel's Reve condo.** COURTESY OF TRIDEL



**CONDO TRENDS**  
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A full-time, on-site concierge or security guard is a sought-after amenity in many condos that may put your mind at ease, but the extra cost can be a drain on the building's reserve fund.

The virtual concierge is the latest trend in new condo security, pioneered in Toronto by Tridel at their Reve condominiums. Straight out of a futuristic movie, the innovative tele-security service is a great use of technology.

Vanessa Singh is a virtual